

# PENTHOUSE

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## SPECIAL CALIGULA ISSUE







*What shall it profit a man if he should  
gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*  
—Mark 8:36



# CALIGULA

**T**hat absolute power corrupts absolutely is the perfect maxim for the brief but astonishing reign of the tyrant Gaius Caligula Caesar, Rome's fourth and most notorious emperor, who ruled from A.D. 37 to A.D. 41, in a time predating both Freudian inhibitions and Christian prohibitions. His terrifying four years as emperor and self-proclaimed God was marked by sadistic violence and a voracious sexual abandon that is unmatched in our wildest fictional imaginings. Not surprising, the bloody and bawdy story of Caligula has always fascinated us. But not until the Bob Guccione/Franco Rossellini production of *Caligula* has an unvarnished, unexpurgated account of ancient Rome been brought to the screen. Creating furious controversy and sellout crowds, *Caligula* has become the most talked-about film of the year. As Bob Guccione explains, "The erotic decadence of first-century Rome is now dramatized on screen as realistically as its opulence and splendor was in epics like *Cleopatra* and *Ben Hur*."



It was necessary to assemble a highly distinguished cast for a motion picture of such spectacular scope. Malcolm McDowell, best known for his role as a punk hoodlum in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, is the terrifying Caligula. Peter O'Toole plays the aged and syphilitic emperor Tiberius, Caligula's grandfather and predecessor. Helen Mirren, England's leading Shakespearean actress, portrays Caesonia, Caligula's mistress, who ultimately bears him a child and becomes his wife. Also featured are Sir John Gielgud, the eminent British actor, as the noble senator Nerva, Teresa Ann Savoy as Caligula's beloved sister, Drusilla, and Guido Mannari as Caligula's dubious ally, Macro. Beautifully rounding out the cast are 13 delectable Penthouse Pets, including Lori Wagner and former Pet of the Year Annela di Lorenzo, who appear in the film's most breathtakingly erotic sequence.

*Caligula* (above) faces the horrific killing machine used to execute the enemies of Rome by shearing off their heads with razor-sharp blades. His sister and incestuous lover, Drusilla, watches approvingly. A Roman reveler (above right) directs the orgiastic pleasures in Caligula's infamous brothel boat. Caligula (near right) lovingly grooms and confides in his horse, Incitatus. Offscreen, McDowell fed the stallion his oats daily, a gesture that enhanced their onscreen rapport considerably. Portraying Messalina and Agrippina, Penthouse Pets Annela di Lorenzo and Lori Wagner (far right) admire the stone horses' heads that replaced, upon Caligula's orders, the heads of the gods previously gracing the hall.













As a young man, Caligula was chiefly preoccupied with carnal pleasure—especially when shared with his lascivious sister, Drusilla. But at the age of 19, his appetite for power was whetted when he learned he would someday follow in the footsteps of his aged grandfather, the emperor Tiberius. Awed and intoxicated by the emperor's giddy exercise of absolute power, Caligula watches mesmerized as dozens of pubescent slaves frolic naked in his heated pool. "I call them my little fishes," boasts Tiberius, as they act out the tyrant's every whim and fantasy.

*Caligula and members of the imperial household (above) spend a day at the stadium, enjoying the executions. The condemned men are buried up to their necks in the muck and then beheaded. Livia (top left) admires her phallic wedding cake, unaware of her impending fate. She is played by Mirella D'Angelo, one of Italy's rising stars. The naked young woman (middle left) is shackled to the killing machine; the circle encompassing her represents a clock; her pinioned limbs, the four seasons of the emperor's life. (lower left) Two of the grotesqueries of Caligula's brothel boat.*









Anticipating the godlike power that would soon be his, Caligula grows cruel and callous. Upon discovering that the elderly senator Nerva has slashed his wrists and lies slowly dying in his bath, Caligula's only emotion is overwhelming curiosity. "What is death like?" he asks over and over as Nerva's blood reddens the water. Enraged by the old man's reply that death is only extinction, Caligula disgustingly shoves him under for one last time.

(opposite page) Above left, Leumann Bergara, in the role of a high priest of Rome. (center) Annela di Lorenzo as Messalina soon loses her inhibitions aboard the brothel boat. (far left) Longinus, the imperial treasurer, played by John Steiner. (below) Bacchus, the god of wine, celebrating in Olympian fashion. (this page, above) Caligula, mounted on Incitatus, declares his horse to be a senator. (below) A night of wanton revelry in a Roman jail.







Caligula descended further into madness even as he ascended to power. Frustrated by Tiberius's languishing illness, Caligula enlisted the aid of his friend Macro, head of the Praetorian Guard, to hasten the emperor's death. Caligula's incredible life gave birth to even more dreadful nightmares and paranoid fantasies—but he was ecstatic when the Senate proclaimed him Caesar. "I like this dream," he confided to Drusilla.

*(far left) A roman priest, dressed in the robes of a woman. (above left and right) Reflections in the mirror-lined pleasure grotto of Tiberius reveal nubile women and handsomely endowed men performing sexual acts of every description for his pleasure. (above right) Lori Wagner and Anneka di Lorenzo indulge in the sensual foreplay that culminates in one of the film's most explicitly erotic scenes. (left) The wedding dinner of Livia and Proculus, a feast of food and sexuality. (far left) Jane Hargrave, British Pet of the Year, portrays one of the priestesses of Isis.*









Desiring an heir and unable to marry his sister, Caligula dresses as a priestess and goes to the temple of Isis to find a bride. Characteristically, he chooses Caesonia, a notorious divorcée, in order to outrage the respectable senators.

*The reign of Caligula was a time of unharnessed appetites—although not every Roman accepted such wantonness. Nerva's face (above top) reveals his disapproval, while the physician Charicles (middle right) helped to plot Caligula's assassination. Caligula and his "little giant" (above) direct mock battles against fields of papyrus. Orgy scenes from Livia's wedding (right and opposite).*









Relishing the sensual pleasures of nymphs and satyrs alike, Caligula hosted riotous orgiastic feasts in his palace. Graphically depicted in the film, these scenes feature mountains of writhing bodies indulging in every conceivable sexual excess. For Caligula, the only limit to this wanton extravagance was the fast depletion of the public coffers. As always, though, his madness was not without its method. "Who are the richest men in Rome?" he shrieked. "The pimps! And who are the most lascivious sluts in all of Rome? The senators' wives!" Thus inspired, he built an imperial brothel in the shape of a golden boat, forcing the wives and daughters of his senators to serve as prostitutes to replenish Rome's depleted coffers.

*The horror and madness that characterized the reign of Caligula contrasted with the tender love he felt for his sister, Drusilla (far left). When she is taken from him by an incurable fever (above), Caligula's grief overwhelms him, sending him into a seemingly endless bout of insanity, murder, and deprivation. (lower left) The culmination of Caligula's seeming madness as he revels in the newly acquired riches showered upon him by the prostitution of the senators' wives. Scattered throughout the movie are the dwarfs, monsters, and freaks (left), who were greatly prized by the emperors of Rome.*





"Let them hate me, so long as they fear me!" was Caligula's philosophy of power. He delighted in viewing the wholesale beheading of his political opponents in the giant stadium—efficiently accomplished by an enormous sickle-bladed killing machine he had invented for the purpose. His revenge on Livia's husband, young Proculus, was equally gruesome—after having the boy disemboweled and castrated, Caligula ordered Longinus to send his testicles to his widow as a token of his undying love! His penis was thrown to the dogs. But the death of his beloved Drusilla forced Caligula to acknowledge that not even Caesar could alter destiny. In a hysterical frenzy, he staged a mock war on Britain, forcing his by now unshockable troops to attack and destroy a swamp of papyrus reeds growing in the river.

(above left) Macro, head of the Praetorian Guard and Caligula's closest ally, strangles the already dying Tiberius at Caligula's instigation. Macro (above) is portrayed by Guido Mannari, a former soccer player and well-known Italian actor. (above right) Caligula's wife, Caesonia, wears the gold mask of pain during the birth of their daughter. (far right) The aged and ailing Tiberius fondles his slave children in the privacy of his pleasure grotto. (near right, top) Proculus and his bride, Livia, after Caligula's savage rape. (near right, bottom) Funeral of Tiberius. (left) Claudius, played by Giancarlo Badessi, becomes emperor upon the death of his nephew, Caligula.









Caligula's capricious refusal to marry Caesonia until she bore him an heir was exceeded by his adamant declaration that his newborn daughter was in fact his "son." His madness could also be pointedly amusing, however, as in the introduction of his horse, Incitatus, to the Senate. As Rome's pompous politicians gasped in disgust, Caligula pronounced the animal senator of the Roman Empire. There were no objections.

(above) The stunning bride Livia (featured on this month's cover) in a beatific mood. Her happiness soon turns to terror when she is savagely raped, moments after her marriage, by the leering Caligula (right, above and below). Caligula, with equal enthusiasm, checks the virginity of Proculus, played by Donato Placido (far right, top). Caligula's treatment of his mistress, Caesonia (far right, bottom) is scarcely better, as he leads her into the wedding banquet by a collar and leash.















But Caligula himself becomes increasingly consumed by his own cynicism and hatred. Once, while watching an opponent beheaded, he hissed: "If only all of Rome had just one neck!" Finally, even the degenerate hierarchy could take no more. In the fourth year of his diabolical reign, Caligula and his family were brutally murdered by Chaerea and his own Praetorian Guard.

Caligula is a strange and captivating blend of the erotically beautiful and the terrifyingly savage. (top left) The lovely Annela di Lorenzo works her inimitable charms on a Roman citizen, while Lori Wagner (top middle) and former Pet Bonnie Dee (top right) attend to their respective admirers. (below) Annela addresses the line between pleasure and pain. (middle left) In *Tiberius's Harem of the Monsters*, a spectacular orgy gets under way. (below left) One of Danilo Donato's exquisitely designed headdresses.







Photographs by Mario Turi, Eddie Adams, Stan Meislow, and others.







The unremitting terror inspired by Caligula's reign can be judged by the Roman people's initial reaction to the news of his death: accustomed to the heinous perversity of the man, they suspected he was merely pretending to be dead in order to see what they really thought of him. The Empire had never forgotten Caligula's chilling pronouncement: "I've existed from the morning of the world, and I shall exist till the last star falls from the heavens. Although I have taken the form of Gaius Caligula, I am all men as I am no man, and so . . . I am a god!"

*The hedonistic excesses enjoyed by both prostitutes and customers alike on Caligula's brothel boat (top, opposite top, and near left) soon come to an end. Caligula (above), tormented by nightmares of his own death, is comforted by Caesonia. Eventually, as the signs portend, he is cut down by assassins (opposite page), who mercilessly kill his wife, daughter, and the "little giant" in rapid succession. O+*